United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council meets to discuss situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; members welcome NATO decision to use air strikes to halt attacks on Sarajevo; Russian representative says threat applies to all sides, not just Serbs, and calls for demilitarization of city.

+ Massacre of civilians in Stupni Do, Bosnia and Herzegovina, last October, is described in report of Secretary-General; 36 appear to have been killed by extremist elements of Croatian Defence Council.

+ General Assembly appoints José Ayala Lasso of Ecuador as High Commissioner for Human Rights; approves expenditure of $30 million for expansion of observer mission in South Africa; requests that all States and international organizations to give urgent support to help Madagascar, following recent cyclones and floods there.

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Members of the Security Council today welcomed the decision by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to use air strikes to halt attacks on Sarajevo. The Council was meeting in response to urgent requests from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan and the Russian Federation, to discuss the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A letter from the Bosnian Government, citing the shelling of Sarajevo on 5 February which killed 66 civilians, called on the Council "to determine why the existing mandate has not been utilized to to confront those who have attacked the United Nations-designated 'safe area' of Sarajevo and have committed this terrorist act". Pakistan, representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference, also called for a consideration of the 5 February massacre, attributing it to Serbian gunners. Russia said that some members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were interpreting NATO's demand that all sides withdraw their heavy weapons from the Sarajevo area as a one-sided ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs. It called for a Council meeting, open to all countries, to consider practical ways to demilitarize Sarajevo and introduce a United Nations administration there.

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Addressing the Council this morning, Council members generally welcomed the decision by NATO and the steps taken by the Secretary-General to prepare for the use of force. They stated that those actions had been fully authorized by existing Council resolutions. They emphasized that force was designed to underpin efforts by the United Nations and the European Union to achieve a negotiated settlement of the conflict, and they stressed that air strikes must be carried out with caution and precision. The Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina told the international community that the proper response to a terrorist act was the use of force and not a call for more negotiations.

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The massacre of civilians in Stupni Do in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 23 October 1993 is described in a report of the Secretary-General, dated 10 February (S/1994/154), issued today. The report, based on the findings of the Military Police of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), was submitted at the request of the Security Council following the attack on the predominantly Muslim village by troops of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO).

According to the report, 23 victims have now been identified and another 13 are missing and presumed dead. The survivors have described the attackers as raping, robbing and shooting even those who offered to surrender. The main suspects appear to be extremist elements of the HVO from Kiselkak, Travnik and Kakanj. The Secretary-General said that investigations were continuing in order to gain as much evidence as possible, with a view to identifying the perpetrators for eventual trial before the International Tribunal for Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Former Yugoslavia since 1991.

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The General Assembly this morning appointed José Ayala Lasso, of Ecuador, as High Commissioner for Human Rights, for a four-year term of office effective 28 February 1994. The Assembly created the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights last December, and charged the Commissioner with playing an active role in preventing human rights violations throughout the world and engaging in a dialogue with all Governments to secure respect for human rights.

Acting on a recommendation of its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $30,040,900 to finance the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA). The Mission is being expanded to include monitoring of the elections to be held in South Africa on 27 April.

In other action, the Assembly requested that all States and international organizations provide additional support, on an urgent basis, to mitigate the economic and financial burden on the Malagasy people, following the recent cyclones and floods in Madagascar. Expressing serious concern at the

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extensive damage and devastation in that country, the Assembly said such aid should address needs during the period of emergency and the subsequent process of recovery.

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